

If you happened to be visiting Southampton at the weekend you may have been forgiven for thinking you had tumbled through a worm hole, back to time when short-skirted houppelandes were the apparel of choice for fine gents, a civet of hare was washed down with a jug of mead and the Butts was a place where you were required by law to practise archery.

History was brought back to life with *In Henry's Footsteps*, a free weekend of entertainment at the historic Medieval Merchant's House in Southampton Old Town, staged as part of the Road to Agincourt and Agincourt600 programme of events to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt.

Visitors to the event were treated to displays of traditional pastimes and entertainment from the period, all set against the authentic backdrop of the now rarely-opened 13th century merchant's house in French Street.



Members of the Hampshire Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers show off their skills at the Road To Agincourt's In Henry's Footsteps living history event

Rooms echoed with the sound of medieval music and singing provided by renowned lutenist Richard Mackenzie and singer and viellesse Tamsin Lewis of Passamezzo; members of the Hampshire Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers wowed visitors with their intricate skills; while dancers from Renaissance Footnotes, one of the leading medieval dance re-enactment groups, delighted with their lively and entertaining carols (medieval dances), even encouraging members of the audience to participate in the fun.

The new Road To Agincourt travelling exhibition, created by Blue Donut Studios, was also on display at the event. From Medieval ship building in Hamble to The Southampton Plot, the exhibition examines life and experiences at the time of Henry V and the legacy that remains in the region some 600 years later. Using the latest technology, each interactive panel is brought to life with a click of a button from a smartphone. Historic images transform into

thrilling animations before the viewers eyes, arrows appear to fly out of the panels and tales from another age are revealed by characters from the past, including recordings by Bafta-nominated actor Samuel West (*Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, *Van Helsing*, *Howard's End* and *Mr Selfridge*).

Dr Cheryl Butler, Head of Culture at Eastleigh Borough Council and the lead on the Road To Agincourt project, said: "This was a fantastic celebration of Medieval Life, a superb way to make history accessible and exciting, and an opportunity to highlight the important role the region played in Henry V's journey to the now legendary Battle of Agincourt and, of course, the infamous plot to overthrow him before he set sail to France."

Main Image: Members of the Hampshire Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, Renaissance Footnotes and Passamezzo at the Medieval Merchant's House as part of the Road To Agincourt's In Henry's Footsteps living history event